

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 NEA-10 IO-14 /137 W

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R 041740Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 408

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BE, US

SUBJECT: LEBURTON IN THE RUNNING FOR FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: A. BRUSSELS 393 B. BRUSSELS 127, JAN 10, 1973

C. BRUSSELS 783, FEB. 14, 1973 D. BRUSSELS A-52, FEB. 22, 1973

1. SUMMARY. GASTON EYSKENS TELLS US THERE IS SUBSTANCE BEHIND
RUMORED POSSIBILITY THAT OUTGOING PRIME MINISTER EDMOND
LEBURTON MAY RETURN AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.
THE EMBASSY SEES LITTLE DIFFERENCE FOR US INTERESTS IN HAVING
THE FOREIGN MINISTRY GO EITHER TO VAN ELSLANDE OR LEBURTON.
END SUMMARY.

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2. GASTON EYSKENS, FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN FIGURE AND

FORMER PRIME MINISTER, TOLD AMBASSADOR STRAUZ-HUPE APRIL 3 THAT BEHIND-SCENES NEGOTIATIONS TO FORM SOCIAL CHRISTIAN/ SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY INCLUDE CONSIDERATION WHETHER THE OUTGOING SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON SHOULD RETURN IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER. RUMORS CIRCULATE THAT LEGURTON SEEKS THE JOB. EYSKENS PROVIDES CONFIRMATION OF THEIR SUBSTANCE.

3. EYSKENS IS NO ADMIRER OF LEBURTON (REFTEL A AND B) AND UNDOUBTEDLY HOPES THE POST WILL AGAIN BE FILLED BY RENAAT VAN ELSLANDE, A FELLOW FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN. EYSKENS SYAS THE CVP/PSB - PSB NEGOTIATIONS ARE ADVANCING ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY. HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE NEW GOVERNMENT DOES NOT EMERGE UNTIL AFTER EASTER. ONE RUMOR WE HEAR IS THAT THE POWERFUL SOCIETE GENERAL IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEBURTON CANDIDACY, CALCULATING THAT LEBURTON WOULD HAVE LESS DIFFICULTY THAN VAN ELSLANDE IN REACHING ACCOMMODATIONS WITH MOBUTU.

4. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES LEBURTON AND VAN ELSLANDE ARE QUALLY SYMPATHETIC TO US POLICY INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES. IF LEBURTON IS GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WE WOULD EXPECT THE PSB TO MAINTAIN A MORE RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN POLICY LINE THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE BE THE CASE. SEE BRUSSELS A-52 OF FEBRUARY 22, 1973, FOR THE MAIN OUTLINES OF PSB FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS. WE CAN BE SURE LEBURTON HAS THE MOST INTENSE INTEREST IN DEAL WITH MITTERAND GOVERNMENT IF THIS WERE TO ISSUE FROM THE FORTHCOMING FRENCH ELECTIONS. STRAUZ-HUPE

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